

**Subcommittee Chair Debra Haaland
NPFPL Legislative Hearing
Opening Statement
December 4, 2019**

- **Thank you all for attending today's Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands' legislative hearing to consider seven public lands bills.**
- **I would like to extend my gratitude to the bill sponsors who are joining us to testify and to the witnesses, many of whom have traveled a long way to speak about the national significance of landmarks and memorials throughout our great country.**
- **The proposals before us today aim to commemorate some very significant events and periods of time in our nation's history, including three bills to authorize memorials here in the nation's capital.**
- **The first of those is H.R. 5068, introduced by Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, which would authorize the establishment of the Women Who Worked on the Home Front Commemorative Work in order to share the stories of the women who kept America running during World War II.**

- **With many men deployed for the war, these women worked on farms and in defense plants, fixed cars, flew military aircraft, and served at home and abroad in uniform to support our troops.**
- **The idea for this memorial was developed after a fifth grader from Washington DC was inspired by the movie A League of Their Own.**
- **This young student developed a conceptual design to honor the hundreds of thousands of women across the country who filled historically male jobs during World War II.**
- **Representative Napolitano's bill would authorize a memorial to honor the reporters, photojournalists, producers, editors and others who have lost their lives while performing their jobs.**
- **In 2018 alone, nearly 80 journalists from around the world were murdered, and this memorial stands to be a fitting tribute to our nation's commitment to a free press.**
- **Representative Doggett's Republic of Texas Legation Memorial Act seeks to commemorate the work of diplomats from the Republic of Texas who were sent out shortly after it gained independence.**

- **Among other things, these diplomats advocated for protection from Mexico, financial assistance and, ultimately, annexation by the United States.**
- **London and Paris both have Honorary plaques to memorialize this historic delegation, and it seems only fitting to install one in Washington DC, the capital of the country proud to claim Texas as its own.**
- **We are also reviewing two bills to recognize memorials outside of Washington D.C, including Representative Soto's bill which would recognize the Pulse Memorial in Orlando, Florida, as the National Pulse Memorial.**
- **On June 12, 2016, 49 innocent lives were lost, and 68 others were wounded when a gunman – who pledged allegiance to ISIS – opened fire at Pulse, a gay night club in Orlando Florida, in what President Obama called an “act of terror” and an “act of hate”.**
- **This was the deadliest attack on the LGBTQ community to date, and national recognition is certainly warranted.**

- **We will also consider Representative Norcross's proposal to designate the Peter J. McGuire Memorial National Historic Landmark in New Jersey.**
- **McGuire was a leader in the unification of the workforce. He formed the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and established the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, which later became the American Federation of Labor.**
- **McGuire was also responsible for enforcing the eight-hour work day and instituted the first Labor Day, which Congress officially recognized as a national holiday in 1894.**
- **Finally, we will consider Representative Curtis's bill to rename a mountain in his district and Representative Steube's proposal to waive special use permit application fees for veterans' demonstrations or special events at national war memorials.**
- **The National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Subcommittee is charged with recognizing and commemorating the people and events that have shaped our nation. Today's hearing is a good representation of these people and events.**

- **I would like to thank the sponsoring Members and witnesses again for being here today. I look forward to hearing your testimonies.**